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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. - 46. (Cancelled)

47. (Currently amended) An imageable composition comprising:

an acid curable composition;

an acid generator; and

a colorant, wherein the colorant includes a counter anion derived from a non-volatile acid;

and further comprising an infrared absorber, a photothermal converter material, or both.

48. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 47, wherein the acid curable composition comprises:

a crosslinkable binder; and

a crosslinking agent.

49. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 48, wherein the binder comprises a polymer having at least two reactive groups each independently selected from the group consisting of: hydroxy, carboxylic acid, amine, carbamate, amide, sulfonamide and imide.

50. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 48, wherein the binder comprises a polymer having at least two reactive hydroxy groups.

51. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 48, wherein the binder comprises a polymer selected from the group consisting of: a polyol, a polyether polyol, a novolak resin, a resole resin, a hydroxyfunctional acrylic resin, a hydroxyfunctional polyester resin, and combinations thereof.

52. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 48, wherein the binder comprises a novolak resin.

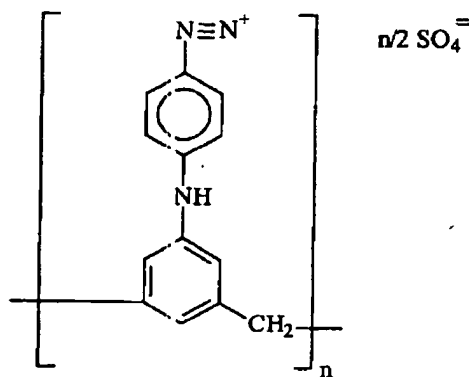
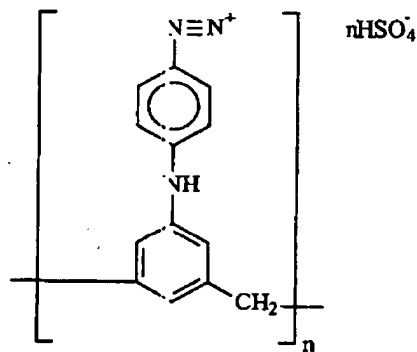
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53. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 48, comprising a crosslinking agent selected from the group consisting of: a resole resin, an amino resin, an amido resin, an epoxy compound having at least two epoxide groups, and combinations thereof.
54. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 48, wherein the crosslinking agent comprises a resole resin.
55. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 48, wherein the crosslinking agent comprises an amino resin having at least two alkoxymethyl groups.
56. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 48, comprising an isocyanate crosslinker having at least two isocyanate groups.
57. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 47, wherein the acid generator is an ultraviolet, visible or infrared radiation or heat activated compound.
58. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 47, comprising an acid generator selected from the group consisting of: an onium salt, a covalently bound sulfonate group-containing compound, hydrocarbylsulfonamido-N-hydrocarbyl sulfonate, and combinations thereof.
59. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 47, wherein the acid generator comprises an onium salt.
60. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 59, wherein the onium salt has a non-nucleophilic counter anion selected from the group consisting of: tetrafluoroborate, hexafluorophosphate, hexafluoroarsenate, hexafluoroantimonate, triflate, tetrakis(pentafluorophenyl)borate, pentafluoroethyl sulfonate, p-methylbenzene sulfonate, ethyl sulfonate, trifluoromethyl acetate and pentafluoroethyl acetate.
61. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 59, wherein the onium salt is selected from the group consisting of: an iodonium salt, a sulfonium salt, a hydrocarbyloxysulfonium salt, a hydrocarbyloxyammonium salt, an aryl diazonium salt, and combinations thereof.

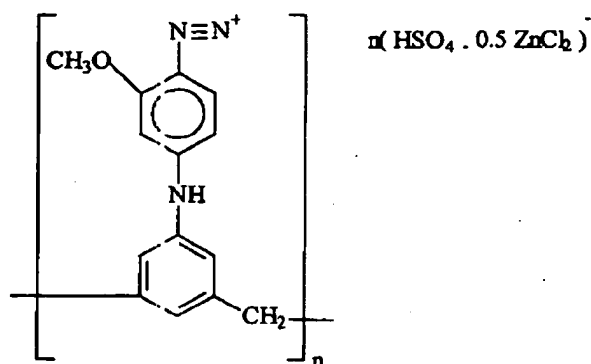
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62. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 59, wherein the onium salt is a salt of an N-hydrocarbyloxy-substituted nitrogen-containing heterocyclic compound.
63. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 47, wherein the acid generator includes a monomeric or oligomeric aromatic diazonium salt.
64. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 63, wherein the diazonium salt is selected from the group consisting of 2-methoxy-4-phenylaminobenzene diazonium hexafluorophosphate, 2-methoxy-4-phenylaminobenzenediazonium p-toluenesulfonate, and combinations thereof.
65. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 63, wherein the diazonium salt is an oligomeric diazonium salt represented by one of the structures:



and

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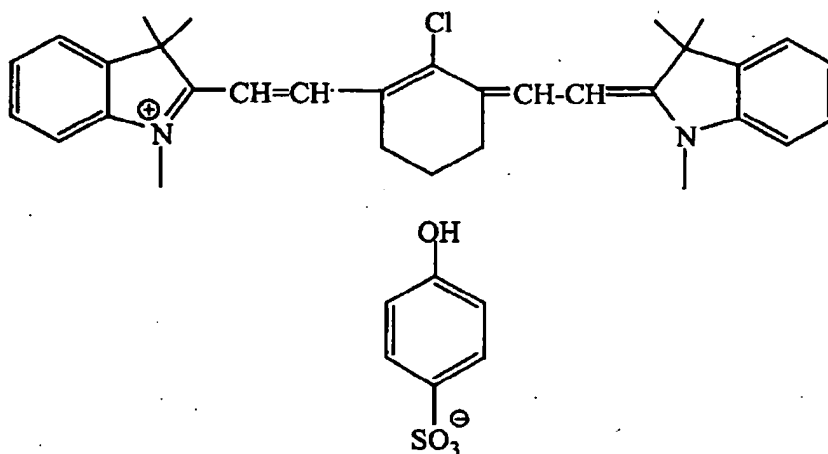


wherein n is from 1 to 11, and combinations thereof.

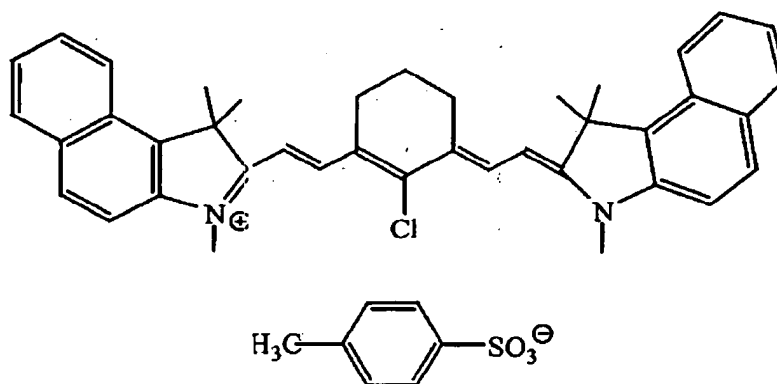
66. (Currently amended) The composition of claim 47, ~~further comprising wherein the~~
composition comprises a photothermal converter material.
67. (Currently amended) The composition of claim 47, ~~further comprising wherein the~~
composition comprises an infrared absorber.
68. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 67, wherein the infrared absorber is selected from the group consisting of: a pigment, a dye, and combinations thereof.
69. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 67, wherein the infrared absorber includes a dye selected from the group consisting of: cyanine dyes, squarylium dyes, pyrylium salts and nickel thiolate complexes.
70. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 67, wherein the infrared absorber includes an infrared-absorbing dye including a counter anion derived from a non-volatile acid.
71. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 70, wherein the infrared-absorbing dye includes a counter anion derived from a non-volatile sulfonic acid.

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72. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 70, wherein the infrared-absorbing dye is represented by the structure:



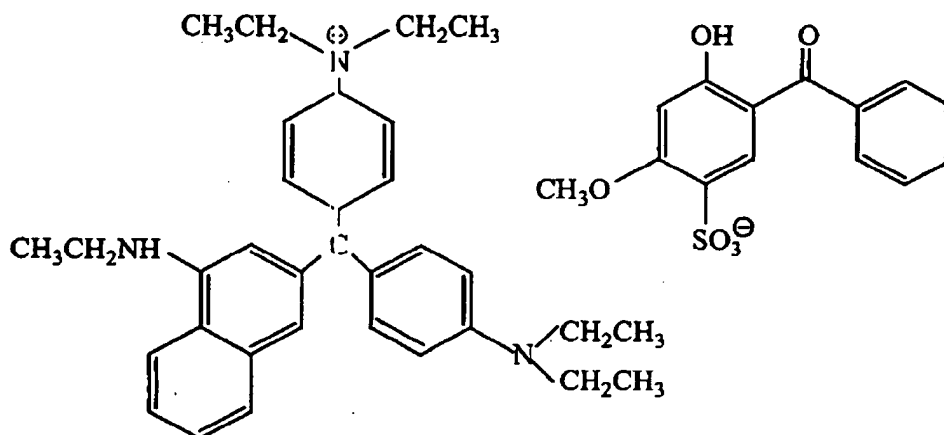
73. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 70, wherein the infrared-absorbing dye is represented by the structure:



74. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 47, wherein the colorant includes a counter anion derived from a non-volatile sulfonic acid.

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75. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 47, wherein the colorant includes a compound represented by the structure:



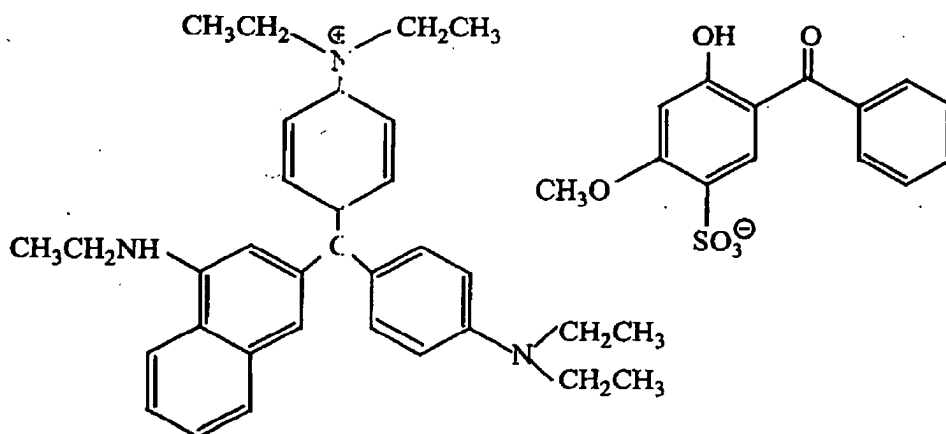
76. (Currently amended) An imageable element comprising:
- a substrate; and
 - an imageable coating on a surface of the substrate, the coating comprising:
 - an acid curable composition;
 - an acid generator; and
 - a colorant, wherein the colorant includes a counter anion derived from a non-volatile acid and wherein the colorant enhances the visual contrast between image areas and non-image areas after imaging of the imageable element;
 - and further comprising an infrared absorber, a photothermal converter material, or both.
77. (Previously presented) The imageable element of claim 76, wherein the substrate is an aluminum sheet.
78. (Previously presented) The imageable element of claim 76, wherein the acid curable composition comprises:
- a crosslinkable binder; and
 - a crosslinking agent.

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79. (Previously presented) The imageable element of claim 78, wherein the binder comprises a polymer having at least two reactive hydroxy groups.
80. (Previously presented) The imageable element of claim 78, wherein the binder comprises a polymer selected from the group consisting of: a polyol, a polyether polyol, a novolak resin, a resole resin, a hydroxyfunctional acrylic resin, a hydroxyfunctional polyester resin, and combinations thereof.
81. (Previously presented) The imageable element of claim 78, wherein the binder comprises a novolak resin.
82. (Previously presented) The imageable element of claim 78, comprising a crosslinking agent selected from the group consisting of: a resole resin, an amino resin, an amido resin, an epoxy compound having at least two epoxide groups, and combinations thereof.
83. (Previously presented) The imageable element of claim 78, wherein the crosslinking agent comprises a resole resin.
84. (Previously presented) The imageable element of claim 76, wherein the acid generator is an ultraviolet, visible or infrared radiation or heat activated compound.
85. (Previously presented) The imageable element of claim 76, wherein the acid generator comprises an onium salt.
86. (Previously presented) The imageable element of claim 85, wherein the onium salt is selected from the group consisting of: an iodonium salt, a sulfonium salt, a hydrocarbyloxysulfonium salt, a hydrocarbyloxyammonium salt, an aryl diazonium salt, and combinations thereof.
87. (Previously presented) The imageable element of claim 76, wherein the acid generator includes a monomeric or oligomeric aromatic diazonium salt.
88. (Currently amended) The imageable element of claim 76, ~~further comprising wherein the~~ imageable coating comprises a photothermal converter material.

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89. (Currently amended) The imageable element of claim 76, ~~further comprising wherein the~~
imageable coating comprises an infrared absorber.
90. (Previously presented) The imageable element of claim 89, wherein the infrared absorber is selected from the group consisting of: a pigment, a dye, and combinations thereof.
91. (Previously presented) The imageable element of claim 89, wherein the infrared absorber includes a dye selected from the group consisting of: cyanine dyes, squarylium dyes, pyrylium salts and nickel thiolate complexes.
92. (Previously presented) The imageable element of claim 89, wherein the infrared absorber includes an infrared-absorbing dye including a counter anion derived from a non-volatile acid.
93. (Previously presented) The imageable element of claim 92, wherein the infrared-absorbing dye includes a counter anion derived from a non-volatile sulfonic acid.
94. (Previously presented) The imageable element of claim 76, wherein the colorant includes a counter anion derived from a non-volatile sulfonic acid.
95. (Previously presented) The imageable element of claim 76, wherein the colorant includes a compound represented by the structure:



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96. (Currently amended) A method of making an imageable element including a substrate and an imageable coating on the substrate, the method comprising the steps of:

contacting a substrate with an imageable composition dissolved or dispersed in a suitable solvent, wherein the imageable composition comprises

an acid curable composition,

an acid generator, and

a colorant, wherein the colorant includes a counter anion derived from a non-

volatile acid, and wherein the colorant enhances the visual contrast

between image areas and non-image areas after imaging of the

imageable element;

and further comprises an infrared absorber, a photothermal converter

material, or both; and

drying to remove solvent, leaving an imageable coating on the substrate.

97. (Currently amended) A method of producing an imaged element comprising the steps of:

providing a thermally imageable element comprising a substrate and a thermally imageable coating on a surface of the substrate, the coating comprising an acid curable composition, an acid generator, and a colorant, wherein the colorant includes a counter anion derived from a non-volatile acid, and further comprising an infrared absorber or a photothermal converter material;

imagewise exposing the imageable element to heat to produce an exposed element having exposed and unexposed regions of the coating;

baking the exposed element at a temperature and period of time sufficient to produce a cured element; and

contacting the cured element with a developer to remove the unexposed regions of the coating and thereby produce the imaged element; wherein the colorant enhances the visual contrast between image areas and non-image areas of the imaged element.

98. (Previously presented) The method of claim 97, wherein the step of imagewise exposing is carried out using an infrared laser.

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